Amendments to the Drawings:

Fig. 7 has been amended to correct the spelling of "expansion."

Attachment: Annotated Sheet Showing Changes
Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 7 has been amended to correct the spelling of the word "expansion".

Submitted herewith are a corrected sheet of formal drawing which incorporates the amendment and an annotated sheet showing the changes made thereto.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendment to Fig. 7 be approved and entered.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 3 and 5 have each been amended to clarify the features of the present invention whereby claim content of the new claim report is input via a client web page in a format substantially similar to natural language, and whereby the new claim report is registered in the knowledge base section in a format including at least a claim title structured as a combination of predetermined items of definition information expressed in standard terms, based on the claim content in the format substantially similar to natural language.

In addition, new claims 7-20 have been prepared depending from claim 1 based on the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 18, line 18 to page 21, line 17. See also Figs. 12 and 13.

Still further, claims 1-6 have been amended to correct some minor grammatical errors so as to put the claims in better form for issuance in a U.S. Patent.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 1-6 and the addition of claims 7-20 be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of USP 6,463,437 ("Mongilio") and USP 6,398,426 ("Turnbull et al"). This rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

When problems are reported with products, claims are reported by field servicemen and supplied to a product technology department, which is responsible for the products. In the product technology department, a design engineer takes charge of a claim report relating to a product which the engineer developed. The engineer confirms the content of the claim report, studies the cause of the claim content, and prepares a solution.

Immediately after a new product is released, a variety of problems are typically discovered. During this time immediately after a product is released, design flaws are not immediately recognized and solutions to them are not established in a knowledge base. As a result, many of the claims for the problems are subjected to review by the design engineer. This review process imposes a significant burden on the engineer, and takes time away from development of the next new product.

To cope with this situation, according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 (and corresponding amended independent claims 3 and 5), a new claim report, corresponding to a new claim, is registered (by a claim handling section) in the knowledge base section and the registered new claim report is managed as an unsolved claim requiring an answer from the engineer.

In addition, according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 (and corresponding amended independent claims 3 and 5), the claim handling section is configured to issue respective task sheets for a market countermeasure task which is shared among technical divisions to the respective technical divisions in accordance with the new claim report, and to update a state of progress of the market countermeasure task upon receipt of each respective task sheet returned from each of the technical divisions.

When claim content is entered by a client in a format close to a natural language, however, the same problem is likely to be expressed by different clients using different terms. When this occurs, it is likely that duplicate claims will not be recognized.

According to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 (and corresponding amended independent claims 3 and 5), the claim content of the new claim report is input via a client web page in a format substantially similar to natural language, and the new claim report is registered in the knowledge base section in a format including at least a claim title structured as a combination of predetermined items of definition information expressed in standard terms, based on the claim content in the format substantially similar to natural language.

Thus, according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 17 and 23, at least the title of the new claim is expressed using standard terms, even though the claim content is input in a format substantially similar to natural language. Therefore, redundant registrations of claims in the knowledge base is essentially prevented. And as a result, the design engineer does not need to review any claim report other than the ones that are confirmed as being new, thereby reducing the burden on the design engineer. Moreover, since the new claims are efficiently identified for the design engineer, the review is of new claims is not delayed and a client's wait time for resolution of a new problem is reduced.

Mongilio, by contrast, discloses a system for processing customer issues using a server, with reduced human intervention. According to Mongilio, when a customer accesses a vendor server 14 and views a vendor website, a user system 22 may perform a self-help routine for checking a customer issue database 18 on the basis of entries to fields 38 of a customer issue form provided by the server.

That is, in the system of Mingilio, fields 38 (which are, for example, drop down menus) are provided to allow a customer to describe an issue. The customer simply chooses the correct entry from the drop down menu, and that entry is automatically entered into the field associated with the drop down menu. This increases accuracy in the definition of the customer issue and provides for automatic processing by the vendor server 14.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that the drop down menu based self-help feature of Mongilio inputs claim information in a structured format, and not in a natural language format. And if additional remarks are necessary, Mongilio discloses that a "field for comments by the customer" is provided in the issue form to allow additional remarks to be entered.

Nevertheless, it is respectfully submitted that Mongilio does not at all disclose, teach or suggest that at least the title of a new claim report is expressed in standard terms, based on the claim content in the format substantially similar to natural language.

Thus, according to Mongilio, even if comments are written in a natural language format in the "comments" field, the natural language comments are not used to create a title of a new claim report that is expressed in standard terms, such that older claim reports are searchable by the standardized title of the new claim report, in the manner of the claimed present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 3 and 5.

It is respectfully submitted, moreover, that Turnbull et al has merely been cited for the disclose of updating the state of progress of a task.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 3 and 5, and claims 2, 4 and 6-20 respectively depending therefrom, clearly patentably distinguishes over Mongilio and Turnbull et al under 35 USC 103.

* *

In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

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Unit (J)	Unit (E)
U01 給紙ユニット	U01 Paper feeder unit
U02 オプション給紙ユニット	U02 LCF/PFU/PFP
U03 光学/レーザーユニット	U03 Optional/Laser Unit
U04 ドラム	U04 Drum
U05 チャージャー/グリッド	U05 Charger/Grid
U06 現像器ユニット	U06 Developer unit
U07 トナー/カートリッジ	U07 Toner/Cartridge
U08 クリーナーユニット	U08 Cleaner unit
U09 プロセスユニット全般	U09 Process unit in overall
U10 機体内用紙搬送ユニット	U10 Paper transport unit
U11 定着器ユニット	U11 Fuser unit
U12 排紙ユニット	U12 Exit unit
U13 ADD	U13 ADD
U14 ADF	U14 ADF
U15 ソーター/フィニッシャー	U15 Sorter/Finisher
U16 ドライブユニット	U16 Drive Unit
U17 コンパネユニット	U17 Control Panel unit
U18 PC板、その他電気部品	U18 PWA or other electrical circuit
U19 電源ユニット/高圧トランス	U19 Power supply unit/HVT
U20 HDD/拡張メモリー	U20 HDD/~~Expanssion~~ Expansion memory
U21 ネットワークコントローラー	U21 Network controller
U22 FAX/NCUボード	U22 FAX/NCU board
U23 本体ファームウエア	U23 Firmware in machine
U24 ドライバーソフトウエア	U24 Driver software
U25 ネットワーク環境	U25 Network environment
U26 外装カバー	U26 Exterior covers
U27 梱包箱	U27 Packaging
U28 その他	U28 Others

FIG. 7